

JACOBS LADDER,
OR THE HIGH WAY
TO HEAVEN.

Being the last Sermon that Master
Henry Smith made.

*And now published, not (as many forged
things have beene in his name) to deceive the
Christian Reader, but to instruct and prepare
him with oyle in his lampe, joyfully
to meete the Lord Iesus in his
second coming.*

1. THESS. 5. 21.

Trye all things, and keep that which is good.



AT LONDON
Printed by the widdow Orwin, for Thomas
Marr, 1591.





Jacobs Ladder, or the way

to Heauen.

1. COR. 9. 24.

So runne that yee may obtaine.



Because I haue but one houre to teach you all that you must learn of me, I haue chose a text which is like Jacobs ladder, that shewes you the way to heauen. This is all that you would know; and it may please God to open your eyes, that you may know it before ye depart. Heare to practise, hinder not the spirit, but let it worke without resistance; recorde when you are gone, and you shall see the great power of God, what he is able to doe for you by one sentence of this booke, if ye digest it well. *So runne, &c.* Then we must see first how we should runne: Secondly, what we shall obtaine: Thirdly, what will hinder vs: that is, we must see the way, the lettes, and the ende. Foure thinges marke in the way, first, begin betime, secondly, make hast: thirdly, keepe the way: fourthly, continue to the end, & thou shalt obtaine heauen, whither Christ by these steppes, is gone before thee. When I haue set you in the way, I will point at all the lettes, stops,

B

rubbes,

Jacobs Ladd

rubber, and blockes which are before you, behinde you, beside you, the temptations of prosperitie, the temptations of aduersitie, the temptations of heresie, which stand in the streetes, like the fierie swordes to stop the way to Paradise. Then I will leade you to the mount, as God did Moses, and shew you a far off the blessed land the countrie aboue, that you may see where heauen is, what is the way to it, and what glory and happines is there. When I have shewed you the way, the lettes, and the end, I will commit you to the race, and end as I began : *So runne that ye may obtaine.* So often as I haue read or considered these words which you heare, they seeine (methinks) to put vs in mind that we are out of the way, and that there is another way, (if wee seeke it) nearer yet to the kingdome of heauen, then that which wee take, therefore the holy Apostle doth warne euery man to ponder his steps, (that running) wee may obtaine that which we runne for, which is the worthiest price that euer was giuen, and neuer was giuen, but to him which keepeth this way that I will shew you. The Apostle sayth, that you must runne. It is not an eage, nor a short iourney, which a drone, a dreamer, a strale, or any carelesse man may performe, and take his ease, set forth when hee will, stay at his pleasure, goe againe at his leisure: but he must while running from the first day he setteth forth, till he come to his iorneyes ends for the glorious heauen is farre from the darke earth, & much adoe to aspire the top of Mount Sio, but much more adoe to aspire the top of Mount Heauen. The violent take it from the North, and the wicked runne to hell, with more paines which they take to doe euill, than the righteous need to take for heauen. The Apostle putteth the word so, before

runne,

of the way to Heauen.

Wise, to teach vs to looke to our way, & not to see
paine & sorrowe. Sorrowe, as if he should say, that
runne than come home, as moe swift than hit the
marke. The heauen Philosophers, Plato, Socrates,
Aristides, Phocion, Pericles, Solon, in their way did
runne faster than we: Constancie, Temperance, Pa-
tience, iustice, humilitie, simplicitie, integritie, con-
tempt of death, contempt of the world, seeme to be
buried with them, and hid in the graue, before this I-
ron age was borne: yet because they ranne without
Christ, they did not obtaine, but lost their labour, like
a man which makes hast out of his way, takes more
paines than if he kept the way, and yet neuer comes
whither hee would. The blinde generation which
knowe not God, in their way runne faster than we.
Aske the Marchants, which haue seene their life and
our liues, or looke in histories and they will tell you,
that our Religion is not like their superstition, our
knowledge not like their ignorance, our faith not
like their feare, our worship not like their seruice,
our christiannitie not like their idolatrie: yet because
they runne to the creature, for the creator, and fol-
lowe vaine dreames, before the words which
came from heauen; they runne in vaine; for their
Religion, deuotion, and seruice, is to them that can-
not require it. Many of our aduersaries, Popists, Ana-
baptists, Donatists, and the grossest hereticks, in
their way runne faster than we. They watch, they
pray, they fast, and distribute more than we, yet be-
cause they runne to traditions, to Angels, to Saints, to
Croffes, to Images, to Reliques, in stead of Christ, and
challenge the merit of all that they do, and would be
canonized beside, that all posteritie might honour
that as they doe Saints: therefore as the Pharisees
logosA B 2 had

had their reward when man praised them, so haue
 they when one doth worship another. If many runne
 and do not obtaine, how easie is it to runne in vaine,
 and how happle is he which obtaineth that, that all
 men wish: when so many misse it for nothing but
 for this, because they runne out of the way. You haue
 heard, read, and done much, and more would doe,
 to obtaine eternall life with the Angels in heauen, for
 this ye pray and fast, and watch, and obey the lawes
 of God, and come together euery Sabbath to heare,
 to pray, to praise and serue him which giueth. How
 many prayers, how many fastes, how manie watches,
 how many works, how many houres in reading the
 word, in hearing the word, in receiuing the sacraments,
 in examining your hearts, in chastising your flesh,
 were spelt & lost if you should run in vaine as Esau hunt-
 ed for a blessing & wet without it. Therefore the holy
 Ghost doth say nothing, but it is like a marke in our
 way, to shew vs when we are in, & when we are out
 for God would not haue vs lose our labour like La-
 ba, which could find in his hart after Iacob had serued
 him twente yeres to send him away empty: but he
 would haue you to seeke and finde, to aske and re-
 ceue, to runne and obtaine, therefore hee saith, so
 runne that ye may obtaine. As there is a heauen, so
 there is a way to heauen: one way Adam came from
 Paradise, and by another way hee must returne to
 Paradise: the passage is not so stop, but there is a
 way, though a straight way, and a doore though it be
 a narrow doore, and therefore few doe finde it, onely
 they which are like Iacob, doe see a Ladder before
 them, as Iacob did, he had many dreames before and
 did not see it, at last he dreamed, and beholde a Lad-
 der which reached from earth to Heauen, and all the
 Angels

or the Way to Heaven.

Angels descended, and ascended by it, to shew that
no man ascendeth to Heaven, but by that Ladder:
this Ladder is Christ, which saith, *I am the way*; and
therefore he biddeth vs to follow him. If we must fol-
low Christ his steps, let vs see how hee went to Hea-
uen, hee begunne betime, for at twelue yeares of age
hee saide, I must goe about my Fathers business: hee
made speede, for Iohn saith, That hee spake and did
more good things in three and thirtie yeeres than
could be written: he kept the right way, for when he
said, who can accuse me of sinne? none would ac-
cuse him of any, though they watched him for that
purpose: Hee continued well, for hee dyed like a
Lambe, and prayed to his Father, and forgave his e-
nemies. Therefore we will call the steps of this Ladder,
Mature, proper, recte, constant, that is, begin
betime, make halt, keepe the way, and holde to the
end, and thou shalt goe after thy master. Touching
the first, beginne betime, God requiring the first
borne for his offering, and the first fruites for his ser-
uice, requirerh the first labours of his seruants, and
(as I may say) the maidenhead of euery man, because
the best season to seeke God, is to seeke him early,
and therefore Wisdome saith, *They which seeke me
early, shall find: but to them which deferre the faith,*
Ye shall seeke me, but ye shall not find me. Wee haue
long purposed to serue God, and euery man think-
eth that he should be serued, but wee cannot accord
of the time when to beginne. One saith, when I am
rich, another saith, when I am free, another saith,
when I am settled, another saith, when I am old, then
I shall be fit to fast and pray. Thus because wee are
gliven to see the best last, that we may haue a longer
time for our sinnes and pleasures, like the Iewes in

Pro. 8. 17.

Pro. 8. 25.

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- Agge 1.2. the first of Agge, which said alway, *The time was not yet come, when they should build the Temple.* Therefore the holy Ghost crieth so often, *This is the acceptable time, this is the day of saluation, to day heare his voice,* like *Rebecca* which taught her sonne the neereft way to get the blessing. So soone as man was created, a law was giuen him, to shew that he should liue vnder obedience from the day that he is borne: so soone as he is borne, he is baptized in the name of God, to shew that when we cannot runne to Christ, we shuld creepe vnto him, and serue him as wee can in youth and age: so soone as hee beginneth to pray he saith, thy name be hallowed, thy kingdome come, thy will be done, before he aske his dayly bread, to shew that we should seeke the will of God before the food that we liue by, much more before the sinnes & pleasures which we perish by. So soone as the Lord distributed the talents, he inioyned his seruants to vse the: who is so young that hath not receiued some talent or other? Therefore youth canot excuse him, because the talent requires to be vsed of euery one that hath it: so soone as God created the man & the woman, he commanded them to encrease & multiplie: that we encrease and multiply in the flesh, before we encrease & multiply in the spirit: the first thing that God did after he created heaven & earth, he did separate light from darkness, shewing vs how wee should separate our good from euill, before our good become euill. The first lesson that *Iohn* taught was, *Repent for the kingdome of heauen is at hand.* The first lessons that the Disciples taught was, *Repent too, for the kingdome of heauen is at hand.* And the first lesson that Christ taught was, *Repent, for the kingdome of heauen is at hand.* To teach what we should doe first, *Repent*, was the first lesson

or the way to Heaven.

lesson to young and olde. Therefore *Dauid* prayed,
Teach me O Lord to number my dayes, not my yeares, *Psal 90.12.*
 nor my months, nor my weekes, but my daies; shew-
 ing that wee shall answer for dayes, as well as for
 yeares, for to day as well as to morrowe, and for our
 youth, as straightly as for our age, euen as the little *2 King. 2.*
 children were deuoured with Beares, for mocking *23.*
 the Prophet: which made *Dauid* to crie, *Remember* *Psal. 25.7.*
not the sinnes of my youth: which hee would not haue
 spoken if God did not marke the sinnes of youth, as
 well as of age. Therefore the Fathers were charged
 to teach their children the same law which they had *Deut. 6.7.*
 themselves. Therefore Christ rebuked the Disciples *Mat. 19. 14.*
 which forbad the little children to bee brought vnto
 him. For should children honour their Father, & not
 honour God? it was a sweet comfort when the chil-
 dren went before Christ to his Temple, & sang their
Hosanna, to make their fathers ashamed which did
 not know the *Messias* when he came, when their lit-
 tle children knew him? It is written, when Christ
 heard a young man answer that hee had kept the
 Commandements from his youth, Christ began to
 loue him: which shewes how Christ loues these time-
 ly beginnings, when wee make him our nurse, and
 draw our first milke from his breasts. There is not one
 confession for olde men, and another for young men:
 In the Creede, the olde man saith not, I did beleue
 in God, and the young man sayth not, I will beleue
 in God, but both saye, I doe beleue in God: for he
 which is called *I am*, I am, I am, and careth not for *Exod. 3.*
 I was, nor I will be. When Christ asketh *Peter*, *I am* *Ioh. 21. 15.*
thou ma? he looketh that he should answer him, *Yea*
Lord I loue thee, and not driue off as *Felix* did *Paul*. I
 will heare thee, I will loue thee when I haue a con-
 uenient

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uenient time : nay when thou hast no conuenient time, for if this be the conuenient time, after this, the time conuenient is past. Manna was gathered in the morning, because when the Sunne rose it did melt away. So virtue must bee gathered betime, for if wee stay till busines and pleasures come vpon vs; they will melt it faster then wee can gather it: therefore in the fourth of Prouerbes, Wisdome is called the Beginning, to teach vs to seeke wisdome in the beginning, as a man taketh the best first. If *Eliab* would be seruued before the widdow, when shee had not enough to serue her selfe: will God be seruued after thee? nay after the flesh, and after the diuell? what canst thou owe him to morrow, which thou art not indebted to day? yea, doth not God require Morning sacrifice as well as Euening sacrifice? It is an olde saying, repentance is neuer too late: but it is a true saying, repentance is neuer too soone, for so soone as we sinne, we had neede to aske forgiveness: beside, repentance is a gift, and therefore must be taken when it is offered. For if *Iudas* could haue repented when he listeth, he would neuer haue hanged himselfe. The time past is gone, and thou canst not recall that to repent in: the time to come is vncertaine, and thou canst not assure that to repent in: the present time is onely thine, and thou maiest repent in that, but anon that will bee gone too. Therefore when Christ wept ouer Ierusalem hee sayd, *O if thou hadst knowne in this thy day:* calling none their day, but this day: if none can bee called thy day but this day, then this is thy day of repentance; or els thou hast none at al. Therefore one resemblith the mercy of God to the Poole in Iurie, where the sick and leprous lay, for at one time of the day an Angell came and stirred the water, and then

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then he which stept in first was healed of his disease; he which stept in first was healed, none but he which stept in first, so he which taketh time is sure, but hee which forefloweth time, oftener faileth thā speedeth: for, when golden opportunitie is past, no time will fit for it: yet, as when Christ went about to cast out Mat. 9. 29. diuels, they sayd that hee tormented them before the time: so whensoever thou goest about to dismiss thy sinnes and pleasures, though thou stay till thou beest sicke and old, and readie to dye, yet they will say still that thou dismissest them before the time: but then is the time when the diuell saith, the time is not yet; for the diuell is a lyar, and knoweth that what licour our vessels be seasoned with at the first, they will taste of the same euer after. Therefore linger not with Lot, for if the Angell had not snatched him away, he had perished with Sodom for his delay. They were not wise virgins, but foolish virgins, which sought not for oyle, before the Bridegroom came: Samuell began to serue God in his minoritie, Timothie read the 2. Tim. 3. 15 Scriptures in his childhood, Iohn grewe in spirite, as he ripened in yeares: so whether thou be old or yong, thy repentance cannot bee too soone, because thy sinne is gone before. If thou lackest a spurre to make thee runne, see howe every day runneth away with thy life: youth commeth vpon childhood, age commeth vpon youth, death commeth vpon age with such a swift sayle, that if our minutes were spent in mortifying our selues, yet our glasse would be runne out, before wee had purged halfe our corruptions. Thus much of the first step. The second step in your 2. Step. journey, is to keepe the way, as God taught the Israelites a way to Canaan, sending a fierie pillar before them, which they did follow wheresoeuer it went, so

: Jacobs Ladder,

when he ordained a heauen for men, hee appointed a way to come vnto it, which way he that misseth shal neuer come to the end. As Herod sought Christ ouer all Iurie, but none founde him but those which followed the starre: so there is something still that lea- deth men to Christ, which we must follow or els we cannot come where hee is. There bee many wrong waies, as there be many errors, but there is but one right way, as there is but one trueth. And therefore Iacob did not see many, but one Ladder, which reached to heauen: and Iohn Baptist is sayd not to pre- pare the waies of the Lorde, but the way: shewing that there is but one right way in this life, which Sa- lomón vnderstandeth for the meane, and therefore he saith, *Turne not to the right hand nor to the left*, im- plying that wee may erre as well of the right hand as of the left, as if hee should say, some are too hotte; as other are too cold; some are too superstitious, as o- ther are too careless; some are too fearefull, as other are too cōfident: there is as zeale without knowledge, a loue without singlenes, a prayer without faith, and a faith without fruites. Therefore the Apostle doth warne vs to examine whether we be in the faith, not whether we haue a kind of faith, but whether we be in the faith? that is, the true faith. Therefore Paule saith, *Runne so*: it is not enough to runne, but wee must know how we runne: it is not enough to heare, but we must care how to heare: it is not enough to beleue, but we must care how we beleue: it is not enough to pray, but we must care how we pray: it is not enough to worke, but wee must care how wee worke: for we cannot doe good, vnlesse wee doe it well, as wee may see in this example. Cain offered, and God abhorred, because he cared not for the man-

ner,

or the way to Heauen.

ner, God cared not for his offering. Simon Magus beleueed, Herod listened, Felix feared, Saul obeyed, Iesabell fasted, the Pharisees prayed, but because they did not beleue so, heare so, feare so, obey so, fast so, & pray so, as he which saith, Learne of me: whē they say that they haue fasted, & prayed, and obeied, Christ be will answer them as hee doth in Mathew, *I know you not.* Therefore if ye aske like the scribe, how ye shal come to heauen, the right way to heauen is the word, which came from heauen. But here some will say, the word indeed doth containe the right way, but many cannot finde that way without a guide. Therefore I haue picked out of the worde that way which God calleth the right way: the way which the word doth set thee into heauen, is to doe vnto other as thou wouldest haue other doe vnto thee, to exercise good workes, and yet beleue that Christs works shal save thee: to pray without doubting, and yet be content that thy prayer be not graunted: to keepe within thy calling, and doe nothing by contention: to bring thy will vnto Gods will, and suffer for Christ, because he hath suffered for thee: to repent not onely for thine open and grosse faulces, but for to count euery sinne great, to apply all things to the glory of God, and of euery thing to make some vse.

Thus the worde goeth before vs like the fierie pillar, and shewes vs when we are in, and when we are out, for else the broad way would seeme the best way, and therefore all which care not for the word, go like blinde men to hell for heauen: looks but to the Papists, which haue the word in an vknowne tongue, some clamber to heauen with merities, some by Angels, some by penance, and some by pardons, and suchy man hath a way by himselfe, and all out of the way:

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way: As Naaman answered Elisha when he was com-
maunded to wash himselfe in Iorden, are not Aba-
nah and Pharpar riuers of Damascus better then Ior-
den? may I not wash there and be healed? so they say,
are not pardons as good as works? are not pilgrima-
ges as good as prayers? is not sacrifice as good as obe-
dience? is not reading as good as preaching? may I
not goe to heauen this way and that way, as well as
by the word? No, as no water but Iorden could clese
Naamans leprosie, so no way but the word can bring
to heauen. For which cause the lawes of God are cal-
led the waies of God, and the word of God is called
the word of life, to shew that there is no way to life,
but the worde which is called the way and the life.
Therefore now ye see the way, I conclude with Esay,
This is the way, walke in it: Thus much of your second
step to heauen, which is, keepe the way.

1. Step.

Now when yee are in the way, it is good to make
speed, therefore the next step in your iourney is, *Make
hast*. For this cause Paul saith *Runne*, which is the
swiftest pace of man, as though he should go faster to
heauen than to any place else in the world. His mean-
ing is this, that as a man doth watch, and runne, and
labour, to bee rich quickly, so hee should heare, and
pray, and studie, and vse al meanes to be wise quick-
ly. This the Apostle vnderstandeth when hee bid-
deth vs to adde, as if he should say, when thou art in
the way and knowest good from euill, every day kill
some vice, and every weeke sowe some virtue, and
make thy two talents five talents, thy five talents ten
talents, and ever be doing, and at last it shall be ope-
ned, because thou hast knocked. Christ saith, The
kingdome of heauen is got by violence, therefore a
man must be earnest and zealous in the religion that

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or the way to Heauen.

hee professeth, or else it maketh no matter of what religion he is, for if he be but like warme, God threatneth to spew him out of his mouth: euery man hath a kind of religion, and the religion of most is to bee like one another, as mercifull as other, as humble as other, as deuout as other, but God saith, *Bee holy as I am*, not as other are: for Christ saith, *Except your righteousnesses exceed the righteousnesses of the Pharisees, although they were holier than other, yee shall not enter into heauen.* That is, except ye bee more than flatter Protestants, which goe to the Church and heare an homilie, and receiue onces yeare, but will not offend any person, nor leaue any custome, nor beare any charges, nor suffer any trouble for the glory of God, yee shall come to heauen, when the Pharisees come out of hell. As loue delighteth men, so zeale pleaseth God: for zeale is the loue of God. Therefore euery sacrifice was offered with fire, to shew with what zeale they should burne, which come to offer prayer or praise, or thanks vnto the Lord. Therefore the holy Ghost descended in fire, to shew the fiercenes of them vpon whom the holy Ghost rested. Therefore the Cherubins were portrayed with wings before the people, to shew that they should be as swift and quick about the Lódes busines, as the Cherubins. Therefore God would not take a lame, nor a halting sacrifice, to shew how hee abhorreth slacknes in all our duties. Therefore Saint James saith, *Be swift to heare*: we must bee swift to pray, swift to obey, swift to doe good, for hee is not cursed onely which doth not the Lódes busines, but hee which doth it negligently: that is, hee which doth any thing before it, like him that would bid his friends fare well, and follow Christ againe. The hound which runnes but for the

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hate, runnes as fast as possibly she can: the Hauke
which flyeth but for the partridge, flyeth as fast as
possibly she can and shall hee which runnes for hea-
uen, creepe more slowly than the dyall? Who hath
so much faith as the Apostles? yet howe often doth
Christ say, *O ye of little faith.* Complaining that their
faith was too little, and therefore when Peter answe-
red him that he loved him, as though hee loved him
not enough, Christ asked him againe, whether hee
loved him; and as though he loved him not enough
yet, hee asked him againe, *Lovest thou mee?* for hee
would haue vs love him as he loved vs when his hart
bloud was shed for vs: and therefore when hee deman-
ded his love, he measured it by the heart saying, *Thou
shalt love God with all thy heart, with all thy strength,
with all thy mind.* Thise he repeateth all Iest we should
keepe any thing from him. Our Saviour saith not, that
his father is glorified that we bring forth fruit, but in
that we bring forth much fruit: It is not better to be
vessels of gold than vessels of brasse? Doe ye not see
how Christ reioiced him which said hee kept many
sinners unto repentance, because hee would not lose one
sinners repentance for one worke which hee would not
lose one sinners soules sake so reioicing as all that hee
brought in? Is it was good for the Apostles that they left
all and followed Christ presently, but this should not
be written but to teach vs with what speed we should
follow Christ, washing the faine so soone as it is
seen, and be still so soone as it is rebouced. In this
faine and god our before another, as Peter and John
saw who should come first to the sepulchre, for if
Agrippa could be saved when he was almost a Chri-
stian, Paul would not haue laboured so make him a
sinner a Christian. Therefore though paine be
counted

or the way to Heaven.

counted heresie, yet remember that Christ saith, *None* Mathew 5.
can see God but the pure in heart: and know, that there
is no dealing with these mockers, but to answer them
as Dauid answered Michol, when shee scorned him
for his humblenes, hee said, *I will be more humble yet*
so when they mocke thee for thy zeale, spight them
with more zeale, for euill is not overcome but with
good. Thus we haue passed the third step vnto hea-
uen. The fourth step in this happy journey is, *Perse-*
uer to the end. For if you begin betime, and goe aright,
and make hast; and continue on vnto the end; your
reward is with them of whom Paul saith, *Their end*
was above their beginning. There is nothing in our
life which suffereth so many eclipses and changes, as
our deuotion, hot and cold, in and out, of and on, not
in one moode so long as the Sparrow sits vpon the
ground; but longing like the Chameleon to the colour
of it which we see: If we see good, it puts vs in a good
thought: if we see or heare euill; it turns vs from
good to euill againe: thus man is rolled vpo a wheele
that neuer stands still, but turns continually about,
as though hee were giddy and treading of a maze.
Hee is vpon the side of a hill, where it is easie to slide,
and hard to get vp the flesh: therefore the Apostle
moued with pittie, seeing man stand vpon such a slip-
perie ground, as it were in a ship readie to sincke, or
a house bending to fall; hee crieth to them that stand
surest, *Take heed lest yee fall,* that is, when thou hast
put on the armour of light, and art in the spirituall
field to fight the Lords battailes against the world,
the flesh, and the diuell: turne not backe like Demas,
but remember the comfort of Elissia; that there bee
more with thee than against thee, and that the tempt-
er can overcome none but them which yeeld. Other

4. step.

seruants

Jacobs Ladder.

servants change their masters for better masters, but all that serue God are like the seruant which receiued a print in his eare, after the manner of the Iewes, in token that he would serue his master for euer, like the vestures which bare their owners marke. Therefore the holy Ghost crieth so often, *Be faithfull euen vnto the death: Be not wearie of well doing:* Take heede lest ye fall, for when thou art weary of thy goodnes, God doth not count thee good, but wearie of goodnes: and when thou declinest from righteousness, GOD doth not count thee righteous, but reuolted from righteousness: therefore Paul sayth, *Pray continually:* as though prayer were nothing without continuance: Iacob did not ouercome God so soone as hee began to wrestle with him, but when hee had wrestled with him all night. And it is said that Christ tooke pittie of them that stayed with him: I will not leaue thee saith Elisha to Elisha: so wee should not leaue God: some came into the vineyard in the morning, and some at noone, but none receiued any rewarde, but they which stayd vntill night. As Gods mercie endureth for euer, so our righteousness should endure for euer. Every thought, and word, and deede in a faithfull man is a step towards heauen, in euery place he meeteth Christ, euery thing puts him in minde of God, he seekes him to find him, and when hee hath found him he seekes him still, hee is not satisfied, because at every touch there comes some victorie from him. Iacob serued seuen yeares for Rachel, and after that he serued seuen more, and yet hee was content to serue seuen more, and when hee had serued so many yeares they seemed vnto him as nothing, because he loued: hee which serued so long for Rachel, serued all his life for heauen: and if he had liued till this day,

or the way to Heauen.

day, he would haue serued God still; And thought
nothing because he loued him to haue the Arke but a
while; doth more hurte to the Philistins than benefite
them, so to serue God but a while, dooth more da-
mage vs then helpe vs, for happier is the Childe
which neuer began than Iudas, whose end was worse
than his beginning. What a lamentable Thing is it to
heare this plainte of him which was once the strong-
gest in the worlde, Sampson hath lost his strength
for Dalilah, for the loue of Dalilah that doth not loue
him: to shew what a shame it is to end worse than
we begin. Christ shewes what a reproach it was vnto
him, which began to builde and coulde not set vp
the roofe, the passingers by poynted with their fin-
gers and saide, this man began a foundation, but hee
could not ouer it: so they will say, this man thought
to bee holy, but hee could not keepe promise. What
shal I say saith Iosuah, when Israel turneth the backe,
when Israel turnes the backe, this astonished him,
and this makes the whole Temple shake when the
pillars tremble? What an offence is it to the Church
to see Peter to denye Christ, which saide euen now
that hee would neuer forsake him? To see Lot com-
mune in best with his daughters in the mount, which
strued so to preserue them chaste in Sodome, to see
Solomon worship Idols which erected the Temple
for the worship of God, to see Noah mocked of his
sonne for drunkennes, for whose righteousnes his
sonne escaped, as if the starres should fall from Hea-
uen, and light goe from the sunne. Wisdome is an-
grie with him which leaueth his righteousness, to be-
come worse, the Vine would not forsake her grapes, Iudg 9.
the Oliue would not forsake his fatnes, the fig tree
would not leaue his sweetnes, but the brauerie of

Jacobs Ladder,

hee is not the Vine, nor the Oliue, nor the Figgetree, but hee was a bramble made for the fire, which lea-
ueth the ioyes, let the dogge turne to the vomit, and
the swine to the wallowe, but you like Abraham
holde on thy sacrifice vnto the euening, in the eue-
ning of thy life, and a full measure shall be measured
vnto thee. This is a long steppe, and man is like a
horse which loueth short iourneyes, therefore how can
hee hold out so farre: when one tolde Socrates, that
hee would very faine goe to Olympus, but hee feared
that he should not be able to endure the paynes, So-
crates answered him, I know that thou vseth to walke
euery day betweene thy meales, which walke conti-
nue forward in thy way to Olympus, and within fise
or sixe dayes thou shalt come thither: how easie this
was, and yet he sawe it not, so is the way to Heauen,
if men doe bende themselues asmuch to doe good, as
they beate their braines to doe euill, they might goe
to Heauen with lesse trouble than they goe to hell.
Our idle houres are enough to get wisdom, & know-
ledge and faith, till we were like saints among men: if
thou looke onely to the stoppes, & tell all the thornes
which lie in thy way, thou shalt goe fearefully, weari-
lie, and vnwillingly, euery thing shal turne thee aside,
and euery snail shall step before thee, and take thy
croune from thee: but then lift vp thine eyes from
the earth and looke to Christ calling, the spirite assi-
sting, the Father blessing, the Angels comforting, the
word directing, the croune inuiting, and thy fetters
shal fall from thee, & thou shalt rise like the Sunne, &
maruaile how the thing could seeme so hard, and bee
so easie, when ye doe well remember that ye change
not for the worse, and doe, as ye doe then, and ye shal
continue to the ende. Now I haue encouraged you
like

or the way to Heauen.

like souldiers, and taken away your feare; I will bring you to the sight of your enemies, and will see them before your face, not to weaken you, for that were want of charitie, but to make you wary, which is true loue indeede. To number them surely I cannot, they are so many: and exactlie to describe them, it is beyond my skill, they are so subtil. Howbeit, to giue you a little taste: I may say as Elisha saide to his seruant, and you shall see it, if you haue your eyes open: feare not, for they that be with vs are more than they that be with them, and he that is on our side is stronger then all. But if you will heare what the holy Apostle saith touching them, I can tell you. He affirmeth, and that by the very spirite of God: we wrestle not against flesh and blood onely, but against principalities, powers, worldlie gouernours, the Princes of the darkenes of this worlde, euen spirituall wickednesses in the high places. And S. Iohn saith, they are the lustes of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, & the pride of life, let other men thinke of them what they list: they that heare them thus described, and haue felt the force of them in their owne soules, could not chuse but confesse, that they haue been many in number, mightie in power, subtil in practise, and what not: who knoweth not this, that the more enemies wee haue, the more need we haue, both of force outwardlie, and of care inwardly: as againe, the more powerfull they are, and the more weake wee are, the more we should seeke for helpe else where. In outward and bodilie foes and forces, wee confesse the truth of this, and doe all what we can to shew our selues wise, circumspecte, and couragious: How much more had wee need here, to expresse all these things,

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things, where the conflict is more hard, though the conquest obtained be more glorious; and where againe our foes and their forces, be more mightie and many, though their ouerthrow once performed, giueth them the foles foile. But whom shall we looke to herein? Other men are as weak as our selues, if not worse, for all men, lay them vpon a ballance, they are altogether lighter than vanitie is false. And if wee feare and distrust our selues, how dare wee, or howe can wee put confidence in others? specially sith God saith, *Cursed is euery one that maketh selfe and bloud his trust.* To looke vp to the holy and blessed Angels, will doe vs little good, because they goe not but being sent, and alwayes waite for a word and warrant from the Lords owne mouth for all their actions: besides that, their owne oyle and force is little enough for their owne supportation. To God therefore, that is the God of our strength, wee must needes come, yea and to him alone, or else wee are utterly ouerthrowne and cast away. And if wee cannot say and do too as Dauid did, *Lord whom haue I in heauen but thee, &c. I haue desired none in earth but thee.* we are in a wofull taking, and utterly lost. For feare without, and fire within, Satens malice, alchemens mischief, and our corruption, will carrie and harrie vs, as it were a violent tempest or whirlewind. Amongst the heathen they had many odde conceits, to chase away bodily and spirituall enemies, as those that haue written their histories and actions, haue plainly set forth: sometimes fire, sometimes water, sometimes bloud, and sometimes one thing, and sometimes an other, as mans braine is a bountifull ship to forge such deuises in. The Papists differ not much from them, who thinke that whippings and scourgings,

or the way to Heaven.

scourgings, will tame and subdue the corrupt affections of the heart; and that the casting of a little holy water (as they call it,) or the making of a crosse in the face, forehead, breast, or any other place, will chase away Satan, & all his hellish powers. Of all which actions & ceremonies either heathenish or popish, were they better than they be, (but indeed they are farke nought as they vse them) we may say as the Apostle saith: *Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godlines is profitable vnto all things.* And had Satans malice, and mans presumption stayed here, and gone no further in grosse imaginacions, concerning this and other matters, it had bin the lesse euill. But in our light and libertie of the Gospell, some suppose, that the very saying of *Lord haue mercy vpon vs,* and that without faith or feeling, many times, is all in all: and the pronouncing of this petition, *Leade vs not into temptation,* and that without sense or vnderstanding of it, is sufficient to funder Satan, and our owne corruption as farre from vs, as the East is from the West. Vpon them their spirituall enemies preuailed, by grosse ignorance, and superstitious conceits: vpon vs by carelesse presumption, and presumptuous carelesnesse, neither the one of vs, nor the other, vnderstanding rightly as wee should, either our foes forces, or our owne weakenes. And that is the cause why they and we in former time and of late, toynd with them, and sundred from them, haue receiued very fearful fales and ouerthrowes: For all is one with Satan, for he catch and snatch men, and haue them in possession, he careth not by what meanes. But wilt thou not escape danger onely, but overcome also? I will shew thee O man, what thou shalt doe, at any hand go out of thy selfe and other creatures whatsoever, for if thou

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Sticke to them though neuer so little, thou doest dis-
advantage thy selfe at the least, if not ouerthrow thy
selfe. The wicked spirits are as strong to effect euill,
as the elect are to doe good: and so much the more
powerfull that way, by howe much they attempt it
with commission from God, and finde fit matter in
men to worke vpon. And what then? fixe the eye of
thy faith fast vpon God in Christ, and thou shalt ne-
uer miscarrie. For hee that cannot lye hath sayd it,
I will not faile thee, nor forsake thee for ener: and in
the new Testament Christ hath tolde vs, which is al-
so a word of as sure a promise, *The gates of hell shall
not preuaile against this faith.* Nay, I will say more
in the strength and power of this perswasion, thou
shalt be made more than a conquerour, thorow him
that hath loued thee, and washed thee in his owne
hart blood. I know and confesse there are many lets
and hinderances, to the perswasion and practise of
this truth: but heare and belecue onely, and I will
shewe you yet a more perfect and assured waye, by
which you shall bee made to walke safe, either in the
day of death, or in the time of temptation, or in any
other course or crosse, that may betide you in this life.
See that you haue not onely the two side postes, and
the vpper doore postes of your houses, stricken ouer
with the blood of the Lambe, but your harts purged
through faith in his blood, from the power of dead
works; and then the destroyer that ouerthroweth o-
thers, shall passe ouer thee, and bring thee in good
time to the full fruition of the heauenly Canaan. But
thou wilt say as the slothfull person doth in the Pro-
uerbe, *There is a lyon, yea many lyons in the way:* I an-
swere: reckon them vp, and bring them forth: they
shall all by Gods grace be easily removed. All sorts
of

or the way to Heauen.

of afflictions are bitter, I confesse it, and so are many thinges in meate, drinke, and phisicke, and yet wee refuse them not, but vse them rather, because of the good we know or hope, they will effect in vs. And why say wee not, as the Apostle by the spirite doth; *No chastisement for the present seemeth to bee ioyous, but grieuous?* Howbeit afterward it bringeth forth the quiet fruite of righteousness, vnto them which are thereby exercised. Death also is dreadfull: what then? but to whom I pray thee? euen to the man that hath bistrust in his riches, or hath no hope of a better life: but to him that beleueth in Christ, it is become through the power of the death and obedience of Christ, a speedie passage to eternall life. We endure many dreadfull and dangerous thinges, and runne through fire & water, and also for a corruptible crowne: And why should wee not with patience and prayer passe through this, which is the very high way to heauen? Besides, hell is horrible. Neither will I deny that: but still I demaund to whom it is so? surely to the diuell and his Angels, and all manner of wicked ones, for whom it hath beene prepared of old: but as for the godly and elect, it cannot come nigh them. For Christ the very way, truth, and life it selfe hath tolde vs, and therefore we ought to credit it: *He that beareth my words, and beleueth in him that sent mee, hath euerlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death vnto life.* Lastly, is not sinne a shrewd and sore enemy to encounter with? I confesse it: but to whome tell mee I beseech you? euen to them in whose mortall bodies it reigneth, to fulfill the concupiscences thereof. To other, in whom the roote of it is dead, it is not so, whether we respect this life, or that which is to come: for here the re-
liques.

Jacobs Ladder,

liques of sinne, are but as pricks in our sides, to pro-
uoke vs to better things, and to stirre vs vp to hunger
and thirst after righteousnes: and for the life to come;
we shall be vitterly freed from the same, and haue all
teares wiped fro our eyes. To bring all into a summer
I say let all objected be as true, as any thing may bee
yet all these and a thousand more such like, are no-
thing to him that is in Christ. For the Apostle sayth,
There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ
Iesus: and it is hee alone that hath destroyed death,
and became sinne for vs, that wee in him might bee
made the righteousnes of God. And surely such a
one may in some good measure of comfort, ioyfully
say to the defiance euen of death it selfe, and all o-
ther ghostly enemies whatsoeuer: *O death where is*
thy sting! O graue where is thy victorie! The sting of
death is sinne, and the strength of sinne is the lawe: but
thanks bee vnto GOD which hath giuen vs victorie
through our Lord Iesus Christ. Yea hee may say, as
the Saints and Martyrs haue sayd in the middest of
firie flames, I am perswaded that neither death, nor
life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor
things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor
depth, nor any other creature, shall bee able to sepa-
rate me from the loue of God which is in Christ Ie-
sus our Lord. Oh but death is terrible still! I answer
in such a cloud of witnesses, and euidence of truth,
may I not in some sort and sense say, O faithlesse ge-
neration, how long shall I bee with you? how long
now shall I suffer you? Is it searefull to any, but to a
naturall man, and to him that hath his felicitie here;
and in the things of this life? Surely it is nothing ter-
rible to him, that is made a comfortable partaker of
the fruits of the death of Christ, who dyed and rose
again

againe, so the ende he might destroy death, and him that
 had the power of death, euen the diuell himselfe. But hel is
 horrible. True: but yet to the, for whom it is prepared; but
 thou art in Christ exempted from it. For why did he him-
 selfe suffer hellish torments both in body & soule to leaue
 thee eternall to make it terrible or horrible to thee? no,
 but to free thee and all his from the feare of hell, & the ter-
 ring of euerlasting condemnation. Oh but what shall I say
 touching my sin that is great and grieuous, & the peculias
 wages of it, is death eternall. That is true in the nature of
 sin, & the iustice of God: but with the Lord there is mer-
 cy, that he may be feared. Stand still a while, and you shall
 beholde the great works of God: & be not faithlesse but
 faithfull, and beleue the truth of the word. What is more
 cleere then this? where sinne hath abounded, there grace
 hath abounded much more. And though it be in a Pro-
 phet, yet twice haue we a more plaine, plentifull, & euan-
 gelicall promise then this? Though your sinnes were as
 crimson, they shall be made white as snow: though they
 were red as skales, they shall be as wool. If we haue the had
 or writing of an honest man, we think our selues bound to
 giue credit to the word: & much more should we beleue the
 most true & ynchangeable word of the eternal. To which
 not for his want in himselfe, but by reason of the weakenes
 of our faith, he hath bin willing, the more abundantly to
 shew vnto the heires of promise, the stablenes of his spi-
 rit, to adioyne & binde himselfe with an oath, saying, As I
 liue, I will not the death of a sinner: yea I will be mercifull to
 their ynrighteousnes; and I will remember their sinnes and
 iniquities no more: that so by two immutable things that
 is, his inuiolable oath, & assured promise, wherein it is im-
 possible that God should lye, we might haue strong con-
 solation. And as for these objections, or any the like, what
 are they worth, but airy and substance, the very euil re-
 port, that the spyte brought vpo the promised land. And
 yet

yet there was a very true testimonie, giuen by Ioshua and
Caleb; yea the palpable proofes they had by the cluster of
grapes, and other things which they brought from thence,
were irresistible witnessses. Will you beleue then because
they are many, that is flat poperie: & besides, God forbid
deth vs to cleaue to a multitude to doe euill. Will you feare
thē, because they are mightie? That is to distrust God, who
is greater then all, and to make them omnipotent, which is
blasphemie. Will you doubt because they double their as-
saulls? That is no end of temptation, but this rather, to ad-
dresse vnto our prayers, that so through thē we may heare
in our hearts that comfortable speech, My grace is sufficient
for thee, & my strength shall be perfected through weak-
nes. And when we shall haue all our senses satisfied, in the
contrarie faith, yea so farre forth, as that our eyes may see,
our eares may heare, our hands may handle the good things
of God; ouer and besides the faith, we haue in him, concei-
uing them, it is not grossly, but simply, not to be-
leue. But here in this life are many pleasures, and certaine
delights lawfull, as houses, friends, wives, children, goods,
honor, and almost infinite such like. That is very true, but
with this home, God interminglith some gall; least the
soules of his seruants might run riot therein. And whoso he
that can be ignorant of the vncertaine estate of all & euery
one of them? Our friends, fall away, as a fruite that is ripe
before his time, or as the morning dew. Our houses are
ouerthrowne, and are like the ruines of a defaced hold, not
one stone of them being left vpon another. Our wives may
be lewde in their lippes, loose in their liues, and wicked as
was Iobs; and wish vs to curse God & die. Our children,
notorious only and disobedient, but vnnatural also, and
rising vpon vs, as Absalon. The goods we possess, are
not vnnaturally by Salomon resembled to the Eagle, that taketh
her to her wings, & fliech aloft into the ayre: as for our ho-
nor, which we make as it were some deintie vpon earth, it is
turned

turned into shame, in the twinkling of an eye, or else forgotten, as it had neuer been: And wee, that in our owne imaginations, are Lords of all, are as the dust or chaffe of the earth caried from all. And what reason is there then, that these or any such like, should hinder vs in our race towards heauen? He that hath an inheritance or land in the world, will not be hindered from taking the possession or enioying of it, when it falleth vnto him, by the reares of his wife, the intreatie of his children, the heape of his riches, or any such like thinges: And why should we suffer these simple conceits, to fiesle away our hearts from the hope and hauing of heauen? Besides, who knoweth not, that as in respect of the life to come, all these heaped vp in this greatest measure that possible can bee in this world, are not so much as a shadow of the good things that shall be revealed. Hath the spirit said in vaine, that which the eye hath not seene, neither the eare heard, neither hath yet entered into mans heart, hath GOD prepared for them that loue him? Or shall wee thinke to a lye? or that GOD meēt to dissemble and dallye with vs? Oh how it farre from vs to thinke or speake so. Is that glorious description of that holy and heauenly Ierusalem, mentioned in the reuelations, but a fiction or forgerie? It were blasphemie for any mans heart to imagine so: wee are rather to thinke, that God by that which is known, and can bee comprehended, expresseth that which yet is hidden from vs, and shall in good measure bee comprehended of vs also, we knowing then, euen as wee are knowne now. Wherefore let vs not feare all or any of our aduersaries, or pulbacks, for true loue expelleth feare: neither let vs bee faint hearted in our selues, but labour rather to lift vp our handes which hang downe, and to strengthe our weak knees, for faithfull is he that hath promised, who will also performe it. *Bee faithfull vnto the death, and I will giue thee the crowne of life.* He that so run-

neith shall bee sure to obtaine, and haue his portion with
the Saints, in the heavenly inheritance, of a crowne that
neither fadeth nor falleth away. But hee that careth not for
this course, must haue his portion with hypocrites, in the
lake of fire and brimstone, that burneth for euer more, and
be shut out of the kingdome with the fearful, unbelieve-
ring, abominable, murderers, whoremongers, force-
ners, idolaters and such like. Wherefore as you loue life,
and loth death, runne well I beseech you; yea euen as our
text was at the beginning, so say I at the ending, *So runne
that ye may obtaine*: which I do not onely propound vn-
to you by exhortation, but commend and commit by
supplication to God for my selfe and you, that euery one
of vs, and I my selfe especially, may in feeling and faith
say: I am now readie to bee offered, and the time of my
departing is at hand, I haue fought a good fight, and haue
finished my course, I haue kept the faith, from hence is
layd vp for mee the crowne of righteousness, which the
Lord the righteous iudge, shall giue me at that day & not
to me onely, but vnto them also that loue his appearing.

FINIS

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